

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Common Skin Diseases. By A. C. Roxburgh, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. 7th Edition. 453 + xxii pp.; 184 illustrations and 8 plates in colour. H. K. Lewis & Co., Ltd., London, 1944. Price 18s.

Skin diseases tend to become a problem of considerable importance during war-time. The infestations are spread readily during evacuation and through the herding together of communities in air-raid shelters; occupational hazards are increased; nutritional defects and nervous strain are factors often first recognized in skin reactions, and the conditions of Service life frequently lead to a breakdown in a man who is constitutionally liable to skin disease.

Skin disorders are a source of more prolonged absenteeism and loss of efficiency than is any other group of diseases; it can therefore be claimed that a knowledge of dermatology is of first importance to every practitioner at the present time. This popular book is a clear introduction to the subject and gives an adequate outline of the more common skin reactions.

The illustrations are excellent and call for special recognition; many are original photographs taken by the author, who is able to obtain that contrast of light and shade which portrays the diseases in recognizable form. This is a most valuable adjunct to the study of dermatology and one which makes the book of special value to students and practitioners. This seventh edition has been fully revised and expanded. The useful diagnostic index is retained and enlarged.

Industrial dermatitis is included in the section on chemical irritants and its present importance is acknowledged by a revised outline of the problem. In this section forms of dermatitis from cosmetics, from resins in adhesive strapping and from rubber have now been included, and aetiology and treatment are considered.

The increased incidence of scabies has in certain areas reached alarming proportions and special legislation has been necessary; much experimental work on the subject has been carried out by Kenneth Mellanby and our conception of the disease has been modified thereby. Roxburgh has rewritten the chapter on scabies in order to conform with these views but also indicates the practical application of them in civil practice. The essential treatment of contacts is made clear, whereas terminal disinfection of bedding and clothing is said to be of little importance. Scabies is no longer stated to be a venereal disease—it appears to have ascended the social scale since Roxburgh's sixth edition! Treatment is very fully considered and many suitable applications are described; the various benzyl benzoate preparations are indicated and details of preparation are given. Other infestations which often occur in communal life are fully described.

Impetigo has been given careful consideration and the proposals for treatment modified; this section has been rewritten and enlarged. Sulphonamides for both local and internal treatment are mentioned with reserve and caution against the use of strong antiseptics is wisely stressed.

Preliminary impressions on the use of a penicillin ointment for local application are included; cases of syphilis, impetigo, blepharitis, eczema and seborrhoea have been treated. It would appear that this substance may later prove to be of immense value in the treatment of certain local infective skin diseases, but that it is of little value in the presence of sensitized skin reactions such as eczema and seborrhoea.

The brief survey of avitaminosis has been corrected and rewritten. A consideration of immersion foot is included.

Throughout the book treatment has received fuller consideration and the restricted value of sulphonamides has achieved an extended recognition. Sulphonamide drug eruptions find brief mention in this edition; the incidence of these eruptions justifies more consideration, and the advice invariably to withhold the drug in any type of eruption would, if acted upon, lead to an increased sulphonamide sensitization of the population.

This book has already achieved considerable popularity, and the improvements which have been made in the new edition make it a valuable introduction to dermatology and a convenient reference book for students and general practitioners.

D. E.

A Synopsis of Clinical Syphilis. By James Kirby Howles, M.D., M.M.S., 671 pp., illustrated. Henry Kimpton, London. Price 30s.

With the appearance of this new book, Professor Howles meets a war-time demand for an up-to-date and authoritative handbook on syphilis. The use of the word, synopsis, implies that here is a small volume containing a condensation of modern knowledge on this subject; the book, however, belies its title, which is surely inappropriate for a well turned out and illustrated work containing some 580 pages of text, in which Professor Howles not only deals fully and effectively with syphilis in its clinical aspects but also provides chapters on the epidemiology of the disease and on the organization of the syphilis clinic, including its social service aspects; in addition there is much sound and interesting information on the histopathology of the various lesions of syphilis.

In the sections on the cutaneous aspects, the primary, secondary and tertiary stages are fully described and amply illustrated with well chosen examples of the various manifestations. The great majority of the photographic illustrations are of lesions in coloured patients, and the